



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE DURING THE LAST DECADE.*

TEN years ago I presented to the readers of *The Monist* a review of the philosophical works which had appeared in France during the preceding decennial period (1889 to 1899). I would like to offer them a similar sketch to-day. However, I shall not enter into specific criticism of the works as I did then, but shall limit myself to a simple review and shall merely mention certain names. My plan will be to indicate as far as possible the principle directions in which they are tending, the purposes which seem to control them, and to observe the sort of rhythm which impels workers in this field to treat their problems alternately according to different or even contradictory methods, which, nevertheless, end by correcting one another. Upon the vigorous impulses which lead us to attack the great questions face to face and in their entirety, follow the lesser ambitions which make us cling to details, to patient verifications, to minute analyses, even though occasionally proceeding by indirect paths.

* * *

The broad attempt at psychological interpretation of social facts—both political and economical—so brilliantly begun by the lamented Tarde seems almost abandoned since the death of its famous promoter.

Moreover it is true that his style was less suited to

* Translated for *The Monist*.

instruction than to personal research and that his vast syntheses can not always be accepted as such since they are often founded upon analogies which are too far fetched. But I have expressed myself before on this subject in these columns and I do not wish to be exposed to the charge of repetition.

After Durkheim, Tarde's most vigorous antagonist, had published his large works, he continued in *L'année sociologique* the application of the method for which he had formulated rules. Following him, his collaborators now direct their attention to the special processes of instruction and criticism; detailed studies abound in great number, particular questions are pursued as closely as possible (such as the study of sacrifice made by Hubert and Mauss); in short, research bears with preference upon precise facts definitely limited.

E. de Roberty, one of the combatants of the first rank, has now brought his voluminous work to a close. We might say that like Durkheim he differs from Comte, their common master, as much as he follows him. It has been his constant purpose to determine the subject matter of sociology, to discover in how far social facts are objective things, the material of abstract science or concrete, and how they may be studied apart from the subjective facts of consciousness. At this we are led to inquire whether psychology precedes sociology, or is itself derived from it, and in what measure—a problem of method and doctrine no less than of classification.

To Roberty there can be no doubt on this point. In his opinion psychology follows directly from sociology as a continuation of social data. He does not accept the extension of Ostwald's "energetic" laws to these data. They are only valid, he says, for composites (cosmo-biosocial), for concrete social data. But how can it be proved that these laws affect also the "social component" of these data?

In order to avoid all confusion it is important to draw distinctions with care. We must not interpolate the psychological method between the biological and the social methods for the psychological and social methods only duplicate each other. The social method constitutes alone the abstract method, the psychological method being merely its principal expression, or its simplest concrete externalization. This view which reverses the terms of the old relation will prevent us from falling back into the illusion either of the idealists or of simple materialism. The qualities of the soul will not directly explain social phenomena nor will mechanics furnish the direct explanation of psychical phenomena.

To sum up: Given psychical interaction as a special mode of universal energy, that is to say, the transformation of consciousness into cognition, of biological energy into superorganic energy, and we have the cause of what we call civilization.*

* * *

Nevertheless psychology, which thus becomes concrete for the sociologist, may be treated by psychologists as abstract. Or, if we prefer in order to avoid all contradiction of terms, psychologists have two chief methods of considering and investigating psychological data. They may legitimately consider those data (1) as detached from the individuals in which they are manifested, that is to say in general terms, by relating them to some leading or explanatory fact; or (2) as in the individuals themselves in the form of definite and particular phenomena.

According to the first of these methods we find general psychology preferably portraying either sentiments, ideas,

* Ostwald's energetics, a concept which solves the ancient antinomy between matter and energy, ought, according to Roberty, to be judged as a forward step of general logic, which evolves in some fashion at the same time that our collective (or socio-individual) experiences are increased. This approaches to some extent the concept of universal unity as logical or abstract monism, according to its philosophical conception.

or some other category of philosophical data in the light of an hypothesis or of a directing principle as Ribot has done in his "motive theory" or Fouillée in his "idea-energies" (*idées-forces*).

It was given to Ribot during these last years to accomplish the revision of the entire psychological domain. To his work, the most important which any psychologist has ever accomplished (as I have shown more than once in these columns), he now adds supplementary studies. Among these are his articles on the problems of affective psychology, and it is not necessary to point out once again the close relation which these bear to his general theory of the primacy of sensibility in contrast to the "intellectualist" views still defended by some psychologists.

Fouillée has continued to apply to the critique of psychological theories his principle of the "idea-energy" which is at the same time the "appetite" or "desire" of Spinoza and the "will" of Schopenhauer. His work cannot be put into the balance with that of Ribot; moreover the object of the two men is not the same. Fouillée presents a very general theory rather than attempting to write a psychology in detail, and proposes an interpretation of psychological data conforming to this theory, or, rather, to its application.

In certain respects it is not a good thing to have the study of psychical data depend too closely upon a philosophic point of view nor is it well for the observer to regard living reality in the light of his own prejudices or systems, because the new impressions that objects make upon him are confounded with former impressions in his mind and only an inaccurate and confused image can result. I do not mean in the least to imply that the doctrine, the initial hypothesis, should be a matter of indifference. Just as in chess there are moves leading nowhere that good players would never make, so in psychology there are points of view

from which data are seen but indistinctly or in a false light. Such in Ribot's eyes would be that of intellectualism. Doubtless it would be as great a mistake to look to strictly mechanical theories for the only possible systematization of psychological data. Those who, with Bergson, regard the data from the point of view of a metaphysical idealism, or with Dwelshauvers, of an improved spiritualism, have pointed out the faults of pure mechanism. Some new studies on the function and diseases of language have led scholars like Dr. Marie and Dr. Moutier to recognize that the difficulties of language do not arise from the nerve centers but from the mind itself, and that they are disorders of the intellect and not of the senses. Being physiologists, these men do not declare for the primacy of the intellect but keep within the field of their investigations. But the results of their researches (which have invalidated the premature theory of Broca) ought to show once for all that psychological data constantly take us into the presence of "functions" which are not explained by the simple play of certain elements that analysis has succeeded in detaching from them.

Nevertheless analysis is not shorn of its value, and partial or even imperfect syntheses mark the necessary steps. Works of detail remain in favor among psychologists as well as among sociologists. Thus Paulhan, completing his studies on character, has treated of the *Morale de l'ironie* and of the *Mensonge de l'art*; Binet has turned his attention to pedagogic problems; Pierre Janet, G. Dumas, and Sollier to pathological states, to the emotions, association, etc. Van Biervliet, the distinguished Belgian physiologist, has summarized and given an appreciation of the state of laboratory research in his interesting *Causeries psychologiques* and in his *La psychologie quantitative*, a book of great value.

To these names it is proper to add several others:

Flournoy, Dugas, Revaut d'Allonnes, Grasset, Hartenberg, Mlle. Toteyko and Mlle. Stefanowska (a fine work on *Grief*), etc. I am forced to pass these over since I cannot give a complete review at this time.

* * *

I must not return to the works of Souriau and Griveau but just a word to call them to mind may be in order.

When Souriau discussed "rational beauty" (*Beauté rationnelle*) and gave to art the idea of "perfection" he surely touched bottom at a certain depth but the surface is constantly changing. One can only enter the protest that the artist aims at a certain perfection; his only concern is that he be understood on the conditions of this perfection, that he define the value of the various elements that enter into the work of the painter, the architect and the musician! Nevertheless I gladly grant that in this way it is possible to show more clearly the relations between esthetics on the one hand and logic and science, intelligence and sensibility on the other; in other words to throw a brighter light on the special problems of art.

Grieveau set himself the task of discovering the principles that govern the adaptation of our internal rhythm to the rhythm of objects. He has dealt with the vast subject as a sincere poet of nature, treating it in various forms in writings which do not savor of the schools nor of lessons performed or assigned. His pages abound with valuable observations and useful hints, and permit an insight into a metaphysics grounded on the laws of a universal rhythm.

There is a new author of undisputed ability named Charles Lalo who in his turn approaches esthetics by a trenchant critique of the experimental school (*L'esthétique expérimentale contemporaine*) and by original studies in music (*Esquisse d'une esthétique musicale scientifique*). I have given an account of his theory in two somewhat ex-

tensive articles in the *Revue philosophique* and shall here indicate only its most essential features.

Two considerations appear in the foreground. One is a development suited to art, an internal dialectic by which music would develop independently of the secondary external conditions to which almost exclusively writers like Taine and Guyau give emphasis. The other consideration, which would seem at first to contradict the preceding, has to do with the dominant influence of society; for society alone has created the "values" of art, has systematized and prescribed the technique, that is, the totality of qualities required in each age in order that a work be considered as "good." The theory of Lalo becomes thereby a sociological theory according to which social activity, differently understood than in the old theories of environment and of the race, is employed here in helping and supporting the evolution of art from within, in establishing and prescribing the results of the dialectic that governs its evolution.

I have tried to apply these principles to the other arts, but the development of painting or architecture, for example, seems to be more dependent on external conditions than that of music which offered a kind of privileged case; and above all the "value" does not seem so strictly and constantly a "collective" thing as Lalo, following Durkheim perhaps too closely, would have it appear.

One of the reasons why I have enlarged upon his work is that it afforded me an opportunity to treat anew the delicate question of the relation of individual psychology to the so-called "collective" psychology. This problem has a place in every chapter of psychology since we would know nothing of our feelings, our ideas, even our logic, without the influence of society and the long continued education of our species. We have seen that in their own way sociologists also admit the question when they dispute

the rank of psychology in a classification. In fact, this problem is not only interesting from the theoretical side, it constantly arises in practical affairs under the guise of reciprocal obligations on the part of the individual and the state, of anarchy and government, and, let us add, of traditional morality and the so-called morality "of nature."

* * *

No question is discussed with more feeling just now than that of morality. It is so closely connected with the religious question that they can hardly be separated. We certainly can not pass by with indifference the controversies bearing upon textual criticism, traditionalism and modernism, etc. They enter upon the subjects of authority, of the church, historical origin of Christianity and of the various religions. But whereas they have a direct interest for only a rather limited public the general diffusion of their conclusions on the conduct of life has suddenly assumed extraordinary importance.

There has been no dearth in recent years of works devoted to the criticism of ethics and its leading conceptions, some authorities professing to dispense with ethics entirely or to regulate and systematize it. Suffice it to name among the philosophers the principal writers that have treated the subject from a broad point of view, viz., Fouillée, Lévy-Bruhl and G. Belot. Neither their methods nor their philosophy are the same. One discusses the value and content of a system of ethics, another proposes a structure modeled on his own theory. I shall not enter into a detailed examination, keeping myself to the question itself taken as a whole. As a matter of fact, when I come down from the leading authors to the writers of manuals or to second rate men, I cannot help a feeling of distress. I feel too strongly the ridiculous side, I see too clearly the puerility, the vanity of these attempts when the strength of the

effort does not bear witness to a loftier thought by which they are inspired and supported. The death of all morality, at any rate of the old-fashioned morality, will perhaps be the "fine spectacle" of which Nietzsche dreamed, that is reserved for our remote, if not our immediate, posterity; but it is certain that the immanent ruin of all duty and virtue, the upheaval of the fundamental institutions on which our society rests, are facts that are hardly reassuring and from which even now we see disquieting results.

Duties have their birth in social life, obligation is based on habit. These as I myself have frequently said, are the two essential characteristics of a positive morality. Moreover, it is necessary that the duties be felt, that the habits be formed and retained. And here difficulties arise. Even assuming that what duties were necessary for the welfare of society could be agreed upon (which is far from probable), there remains the question of how to impose them. The systems of morals that would fain be scientific confess themselves powerless here. Religious morality alone, whatever its doctrine may be worth, exerts a real authority of efficient constraints, and the reason is that it bases its precepts on truths undisputed by those who accept them, that it makes its appeal to faith. But the act of faith which gives to religions their power has its genesis in historical circumstances that cannot be artificially reproduced. Here lies the difficulty of an ethics independent of dogma. Not possessing the means of creating the faith which would give it life, we must have recourse to the demonstrations of reason,—a support all too frail in the eyes of the majority of mankind!

There could be no greater madness, therefore, than to wish to suppress by force the religious school, as our Jacobins, theorists or politicians try to do, because it is at least one of the sources from which moral habits arise. Such men by their "state-catechism" taught by priests

à rebours pursue an illusory unity, a fallacious harmony of minds. They dread the competition of the free school and ward off discussion, which however is not disease but life.

* * *

Extremes soon meet their counterparts. A fairly active reactionary tendency has betrayed itself for several years in favor of metaphysics (inclining toward idealism or spiritualism) against scientific materialism, or rather against the unwarranted employment of mechanical explanations when these hide too conveniently the blocks over which science still stumbles. One party of our young men follows Poincaré, another proclaims Bergson as its leader. In Bergson's work this party hails a restored metaphysics set forth with the charm of poetry but basing at least its bold propositions and clever metaphors on minute psychological analysis and a penetrating critique of cognition or of ideas.

Bergson reproaches science for seeing only the *immobile*; he wants to seize upon and feel *motion*, to see nature in a flux, and to this end he intends to place himself *inside* of things, no longer *outside* of things,—a difficult operation that obliges us, since we cannot get away from the conditions of cognition, subjective or objective, to proceed at the same time by both analysis and synthesis, by science and divination. But does not this attitude amount to explaining the external by the internal, the internal by the external? Would it not lead us to conceive things under new figures and to express them by new names rather than to explain them in a light that would cause them to be seen in a different way and more clearly?

So it comes about that the notion of duration as defined by Bergson implies increase and creation in time, and the notion of vital impulse signifies the force included in evo-

lution and, for the time being, covers appetite and will. But I have no desire to summarize or criticize such an extensive and careful book in the space of a few lines. I merely wish to indicate the important place it occupies and the direction which its philosophy indicates.

I shall not return to Binet's endeavors, of which I have spoken on former occasions at sufficient length, along the line of the relations between body and soul; nor shall I revert to the works of Le Dantec. Neither biologists nor metaphysicians, in short, have succeeded in making us see more clearly into the phenomena of *consciousness*, *intellect* and *instinct*. All one can say is that, in spite of many failures, our researches have resulted in placing us in a truer attitude toward the problems of life and the spirit. And surely this is of itself no slight advantage.

At bottom the problem of cognition remains one of the leading questions of modern philosophy. But our philosophers approach it in a very different way from that of their forerunners, and the problem itself seems to have assumed a different form. Whereas formerly the endeavor was made to investigate the *means* of cognition and to define its modes and scope, the aim in our day is rather to criticize the *results* (Poincaré), to estimate the true value of the laws of science and the validity of its hypotheses—a sort of expectant attitude that has with some exaggeration been called anti-intellectualism. I would see anti-intellectualism most particularly in the mystic theories of the unconscious and of instinct (Bergson) arising out of psychological studies and tending in effect to limit and reduce the rôle of the intellect.

In this chapter I must also mention some exceedingly interesting writers, curious and original minds, such as Jules de Gaultier, A. Chide, Boex-Borel (*Le pluralisme*) The opportunity to make them better known to my readers may present itself some day.

It is necessary to add that historical studies, dealing with an entire period or with certain philosophers considered separately have likewise not been wanting? Besides the *Collection des grands philosophes* which is growing rapidly, it may suffice to mention the very considerable work of Joseph Fabre, who conducts us from ancient thought to "modern thought"; that of François Picavet, who covers the Middle Ages; that of H. Delacroix, devoted to the mystics; the Vinci of Duhem, and of Peladan; the Kant of V. Delbos, etc.

I ought likewise to mention the attempts at collective work undertaken by separate sections and commissions in the *Institut générale psychologique*. Studies have been made with varying success in the psychology of animals (Perrier, Bohn, Hachet-Souplet) and the phenomena of spiritism (the extended report of J. Courtier). Special problems in esthetics have been broached beginning with a study of visual memory in the painter.

This activity is encouraging. I cannot, however, forebear a feeling of sadness at the approaching disappearance of the strong generation to which we owe the magnificent impulse and fine work of the last thirty years. A new generation is at our door that will gather the harvest in its turn. It will no doubt apply itself to testing the results achieved and to revising our provisional conclusions. May it succeed in adding largely to our common store!

LUCIEN ARRÉAT.

PARIS, FRANCE.